

pact and slaty, with chalcedony, were found in pieces and large pebbles. Those who were engaged in dredging reported the bottom as being of coral, in from four to six or eight fathoms; but this was of a different kind from that of which the fort was constructed.

The fort was built in the year 1784, principally for protection against the Sooloo pirates, who were in the habit of visiting the settlements, and carrying off the inhabitants as slaves, to obtain ransom for them. This, and others of the same description, were therefore constructed as places of refuge for the inhabitants, as well as to afford protection to vessels.

Depredations are still committed, which render it necessary to keep up a small force. One or two huts which were seen in the neighbourhood of the bay, are built on posts twenty feet from the ground, and into them they ascend by ladders, which are hauled up after the occupants have entered.

These, it is said, are the sleeping-huts, and are so built for the purpose of preventing surprise at night. Before our arrival we had heard that the villages were all so constructed, but a visit to one soon showed that this was untrue. The natives seen at the village were thought to be of a decidedly lighter colour and a somewhat different expression from the Malays. They were found to be very civil, and more polished in manners than our gentlemen expected. On asking for a drink of water, it was brought in a glass tumbler on a china plate. An old woman, to whom they had presented some trifles, took the trouble to meet them in another path on their return, and insisted on their accepting a basket of potatoes. Some of the houses contained several families, and many of them had no other means of entrance than a notched post stuck up to the door.

The forests of Mindanao contain a great variety of trees, some of which are of large size, rising to the height of one hundred and one hundred and fifty feet. Some of their trunks are shaped like buttresses, similar to those before spoken of at Manilla, from which they obtain broad slabs for the tops of tables. The trunks were observed to shoot up remarkably straight. Our botanical gentlemen, though pleased with the excursion, were disappointed at not being able to procure specimens from the lofty trees; and the day was less productive in this respect than they had anticipated. Large woody vines were common, which enveloped the trunks of trees in their folds, and ascending to their tops, prevented the collection of the most desirable specimens.

The paths leading to the interior were narrow and much obstructed: one fine stream was crossed. Many buffaloes were observed wal-